

Message Text

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SUBJECT: ISRAELI DOMESTIC POLITICS: YAAD AND THE COUNCIL FOR
ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN PEACE

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SUMMARY: FACTIONALISM CONTINUES TO BE DOMINANT FEATURE
OF ISRAELI LEFT, AS DEMONSTRATED BY RECENT BREAKUP OF
FOUR MEMBER YAAD PARTY OVER COMBINATION OF IDEOLOGICAL
DIFFERENCES AND PERSONAL RIVALRIES. UNDERLYING THE
SPLIT BETWEEN YAAD CO-FOUNDERS SHULAMIT ALONI AND ARYE
ELIAV IS LATTER'S INVOLVEMENT IN NEWLY FORMED ISRAELI COUNCIL
FOR ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN PEACE WHOSE MANIFESTO CALLS FOR
BROAD CONCESSIONS ON PALESTINIAN AND TERRITORIAL ISSUES.
COUNCIL MANIFESTO HAS ATTRACTED LITTLE DOMESTIC ATTENTION.
REFLECTING MARGINAL IMPORTANCE OF ISRAELI LEFT IN
DETERMINING NATIONAL POLITICAL GOALS. END SUMMARY.

1. IMPOTENCE OF SMALL PARTIES CLUSTERED ON RADICAL
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AND LEFT AND OF ISRAELI POLITICAL SPECTRUM HAS BEEN

UNDERLINED ONCE AGAIN BY RECENT BREAKUP OF FOUR MEMBER
YAAD PARTY OVER COMBINATION OF PERSONAL AND IDEOLOGICAL
DISAGREEMENTS. MARGINAL GROUPINGS OUTSIDE THE RULING
COALITION ARE NOW SPLINTERED INTO FOUR PARTS (EXCLUDING
ARAB NATIONALIST/COMMUNIST RAKAH WHICH EVEN THESE GROUPS
TEND TO KEEP AT ARMS LENGTH). ALTHOUGH DOMESTIC RAMIFI-
CATIONS ARE MORE PIQUANT THAN CONSEQUENTIAL, THE FRAGMENTATION
AND DIVISIVENESS OF THESE PARTIES NOT ONLY
DRAMATIZE THEIR WEAKNESS BUT ALSO TEND TO
UNDERCUT ANY SERIOUS DIALOGUE IN ISRAEL REGARDING THE
VIEWS THEY REPRESENT. THESE MARGINAL GROUPS ADVOCATE
A NEW FLEXIBLE APPROACH TO THE PALESTINIANS, CON-
SIDERATION OF A THIRD STATE OPTION UNDER APPROPRIATE
SECURITY SAFEGUARDS, AND A MINIMALIST POSITION ON
TERRITORIAL ISSUES.

2. YAAD, FORMED AFTER LENGTHY INTER-PARTY NEGOTIATIONS
IN MAY 1975, HAD BROUGHT TOGETHER SHULAMIT ALONI'S
CITIZENS RIGHTS MOVEMENT AND LABOR PARTY DISSIDENT
ARYE ELIAV (REFTEL). ALONI AND ELIAV ARE
DISAFFECTED FORMER MEMBERS OF THE LABOR PARTY WHOSE
MOTIVES IN BREAKING FROM THEIR ESTABLISHMENT
BASE ITSELF HAD BEEN A MIXTURE OF PERSONAL RIVALRIES
AND IDEOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES. THIS PATTERN HAS NOW
BEEN REPEATED AGAIN WITH YAAD SPLITTING INTO TWO
PARTS: A) ALONI AND BOAZ MOAV RETURNING TO THEIR
ORIGINAL CITIZENS RIGHTS MOVEMENT FORMAT; AND B) ELIAV
AND MARCIA FRIEDMAN FORMING THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC
FACTION. THE SPLIT--WITH ITS OVERTONES OF PERSONAL
(AND PETTY) JEALOUSIES HAS CONTRIBUTED NEITHER TO
THE STATURE OF THE INDIVIDUALS INVOLVED, NOR TO THE
PROGRESSIVE CAUSES WHICH THEY ESPOUSE. ELIAV HAS
NOW MOVED "LEFT" BY LINKING UP WITH ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN
PEACE COUNCIL (SEE BELOW) WHILE ALONI'S CRM REMAINS
ISOLATED IN LIMBO BETWEEN THE COUNCIL (WITH WHICH IT
DOES NOT IDENTIFY) AND THE LABOR ALIGNMENT. SOME
COMMENTATORS THINK SHE MAY EVENTUALLY FIND A WAY TO
REJOIN LABOR PARTY ALTHOUGH THIS WOULD BE CLEAR
ADMISSION OF DEFEAT ON HER PART.

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3. THE IDEOLOGICAL POLITICAL ISSUE WHICH PRECIPITATED THE
BREAK WAS ELIAV'S IDENTIFICATION WITH THE EMBRYONIC ISRAELI
COUNCIL FOR ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN PEACE WHICH ENDORSES A
DIALOGUE WITH PALESTINIANS, INCLUDING THE PLO, ON TERMS
TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE TO THE ISRAELI MAINSTREAM. THE COUNCIL'S
FOUNDERS AND MOST PROMINENT PERSONALITIES INCLUDE MKS
ELIAV AND MEIR PEIL, SIX DAY WAR HERO GENERAL MATITYAHU
PELED, NEW OUTLOOK EDITOR DAVID SHAHAM, FORMER MK URI

AVNERI AND POLITICAL COMMENTATOR/SATIRIST AMOS KENAN.

4. AT JANUARY 12 PRESS CONFERENCE (REPORTED IN NEW YORK TIMES) THE COUNCIL'S ACTING COMMITTEE ADOPTED A TWLEVE POINT MANIFESTO WHOSE MAIN POINTS INCUDE A) RECOGNITION THAT BOTH PALESTINIAN ARABS AND ISRAELIS HAVE RIGHTS IN THE AREA OF PALESTINE; B) READINESS TO RECOGNIZE PALESTINIAN RIGHTS ON A MUTUAL BASIS; C) READINESS TO EVACUATE TERRITORIES OCCUPIED IN 1967 WITH MUTUALLY ACCEPTED MODIFICATIONS; AND D) PROPOSAL FOR A UNITED JERUSALEM WITH SEPARATE BOROUGH COUNCILS FOR ARAB AND JEWISH SECTIONS, WITH POSSIBILITY THAT CITY COULD ALSO BECOME CAPITAL OF A PALESTINIAN STATE IF IT IS ESTABLISHED. KEY PARAGRAPH OF MANIFESTO STATES: "THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A PALESTINIAN ARAB STATE ALONGSIDE THE STATE OF ISRAEL SHOULD BE THE OUTCOME OF NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF ISRAEL AND A RECOGNIZED AND AUTHORITATIVE REPRESENTATIVE BODY OF THE PALESTINIAN ARAB PEOPLE, WITHOUT REFUSING NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION, ON THE BASIS OF MUTUAL RECOGNITION." ACCORDING TO ONE OF MANIFESTO'S DRAFTERS, MUTUAL RECOGNITION IS NOT A PRECONDITION FOR OPENING OF TALKS BUT RATHER ONE OF THE ISSUES TO BE THRASHED OUT IN NEGOTIATING PROCESS.

5. UNSURPRISINGLY, ISRAELI COUNCIL HAS BEEN GIVEN COLD-SHOULDER TREATMENT BY MAINSTREAM POLITICIANS AND JOURN-
LISTS. THE MANIFESTO ITSELF HAS RECEIVED VERY LITTLE COVERAGE OR ATTENTION. ACTING COMMITTEE IS NOW SEEKING 250 CO-FOUNDERS TO LAUNCH ITSELF AS FORMAL BODY, AND SO FAR HAS COME UP WITH FIFTY SIGNATORIES. REGARDLESS OF PUBLICITY WHICH COUNCIL MAY GENERATE IN INTERNATIONAL MEDIA, IT WILL REMAIN IN ALL LIKELIHOOD AN INITIATIVE
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WITH EXTREMELY LIMITED IMPACT ON ISRAELI SCENE. IN LARGEST SENSE, IT IS PART OF ONGOING PROCESS OF FERMENT ON PALESTINIAN ISSUE WHICH HAS BEEN GOING ON IN LAST YEAR AND A HALF. BUT ANY SIGNIFICANT SHIFT IN ISRAELI APPROACH TO TERRITORIAL ISSUES AND PALESTINIAN QUESTION WILL HAVE TO PASS THROUGH MAINSTREAM OF LABOR ALIGNMENT.
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